



The President's Daily Brief

~~Top Secret~~ 24 May 1968



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THE PRESIDENT'S
DAILY BRIEF
24 MAY 1968

1. France

Word has begun to leak out about De Gaulle's package plan for getting France back under control. When he talks to the nation today, he will probably announce some arrangement by which workers and students can participate in the running of the factories and universities. He also is likely to schedule a popular referendum--a tried-and-true Gaullist device--for this summer. There is still a good chance that he will shuffle his cabinet, either now or in the near future. All this will presumably be flavored with De Gaulle's patented appeals to order and the glory of France.

This package, plus the opening of some splits between students and labor, may permit De Gaulle to regain the initiative. The package, however, is clearly not responsive to one demand essential to many of the dissidents--the end of Gaullism.

The ferocity of last night's pitched battle with the police shows that the students at least have not lost their touch.

2. South Vietnam

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3. Czechoslovakia - Soviet Union

Dubcek and Premier Cernik on 22 May flew to the spa where Kosygin is "vacationing." Both sides are doing their best to pretend that there are no serious differences between them, and the Czechs have made numerous small gestures to avert the Soviets' displeasure. The media of the two countries have continued their sparring match, however, and we are certain that a good many important points remain at issue behind the facade of brotherliness.

As one of its conciliatory gestures, Prague has agreed to participate in Warsaw Pact exercises this summer.

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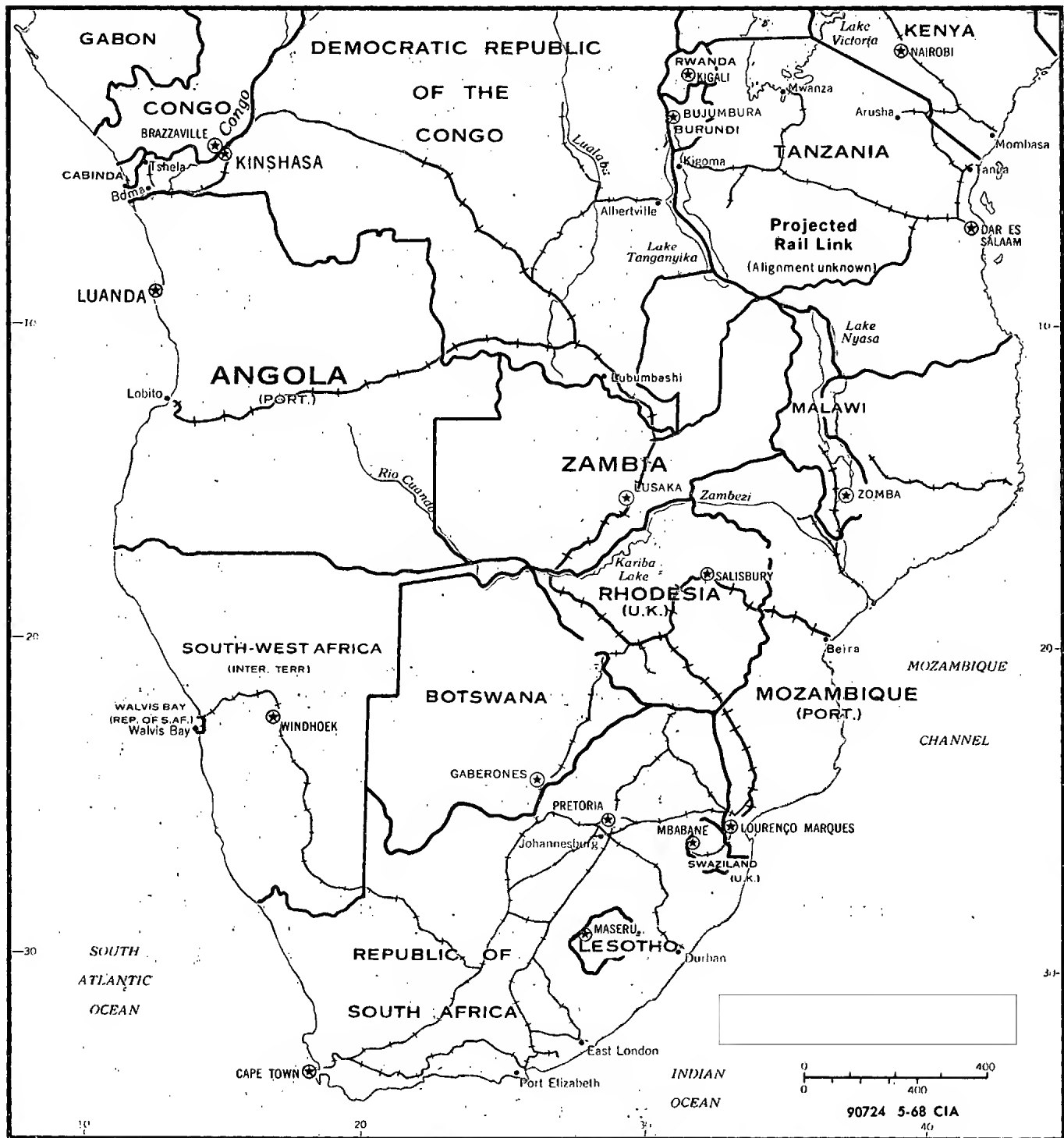
4. Czechoslovakia- France

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5. Communist China

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6. Panama

Samudio supporters have now forced the replacement of the vote-counting board's president. This is the third man to sit in this particular hot-seat since the elections. The first was literally sickened by the pressures he was subjected to by the Samudio forces; his deputy and stand-in was simply too objective to be satisfactory.

Since the president can vote only in case of a tie, the 6-to-4 Arias majority on the board will probably stand up most of the time. Moreover, Vallarino has reaffirmed his promise not to condone fraud in the vote counting.

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7. Communist China - East Africa

Peking is pushing ahead with surveys for the projected railway linking Tanzania and Zambia. Over 300 Chinese are now in Tanzania to do a detailed study of that part of the route, and a similar number is expected in Zambia around September. Actual construction could start in late 1969 or even earlier.

The Chinese have made available exceedingly generous financing for their part in this project, including an open-ended, interest-free loan to be repaid partly in commodities. Chinese generosity has already gained Peking considerable leverage over Tanzania's foreign policy.

8. Australia

Our embassy in Canberra has it from an influential Australian official that Prime Minister Gorton would like the ANZUS treaty strengthened. He is thinking in terms of a permanent watch committee to look for potential trouble spots. The embassy believes Gorton may float the idea during his visit here next week.

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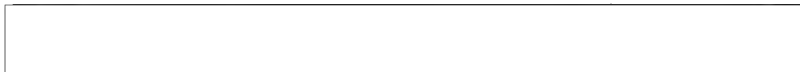
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FOR THE PRESIDENT'S EYES ONLY

- 1.) Special Daily Report on North Vietnam
- 2.) North Vietnamese Reflections of U S
Political Attitudes



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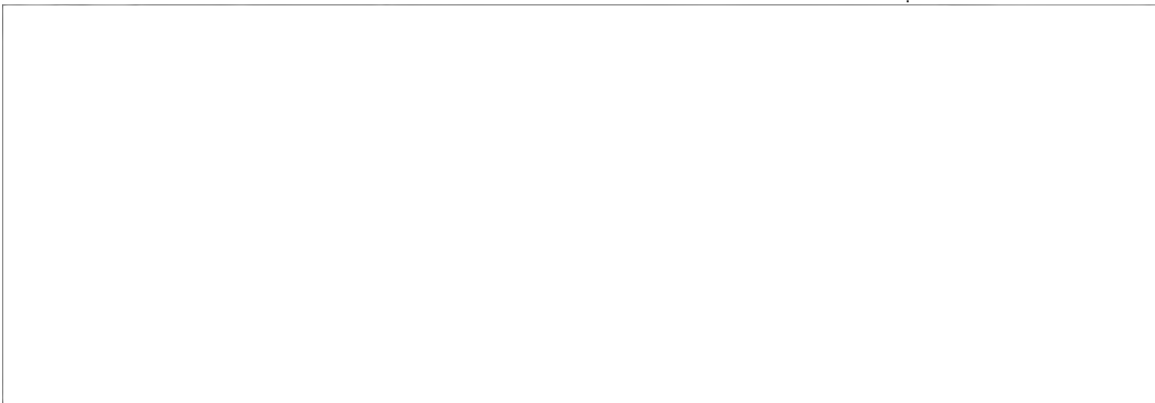
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Special Daily Report on North Vietnam
for the President's Eyes Only

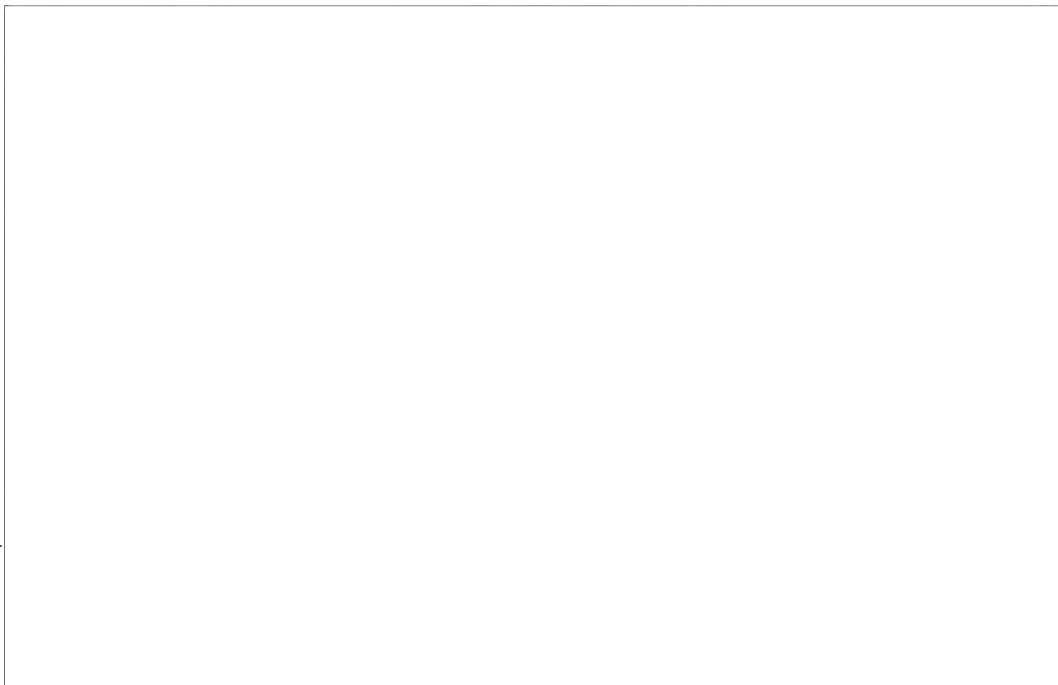
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I. NOTES ON THE SITUATION



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Social Notes from Paris: The North Vietnamese
are not overlooking the social possibilities which
the French capital provides to promote their cause.



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The Paris delegation has already staged one large reception which included prominent French personalities with some background in Vietnamese affairs--a former prime minister, French Communist Party officials, and high-level French Foreign Ministry representation. They are planning an even bigger party for next Saturday to celebrate Ho Chi Minh's birthday. Xuan Thuy has composed a special poem for the occasion. The entertainment will feature Vietnamese national singing and dancing, and the guest list will probably include prominent members of the overseas Vietnamese community.

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On Cambodia: Hanoi has made a special effort in the past few days to blame the US for raising the issue of Cambodia in the talks. A Foreign Ministry statement and extensive Nhan Dan commentary have condemned US "aggression" in Cambodia. These charges are coupled with accusations that the US is trying to broaden the Paris talks to include issues other than the bombing halt.

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II. NORTH VIETNAMESE REFLECTIONS OF US POLITICAL
ATTITUDES ON THE WAR

There is nothing significant to report today.

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